DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 356 542 EA 024 795

TITLE	New Opportunities: A Status Report on the Summer Food Service Program for Children.
INSTITUTION	Food Research and Action Center, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	Feb 93
NOTE	19p.
AVAILABLE FROM	FRAC Publications, 1875 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 540, Washington, DC 20009 ($3, all orders must be prepaid).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Community Organizations; Elementary Secondary Education; Federal Programs; *Lunch Programs; *Nutrition; *Program Effectiveness; *School Readiness; *Student Development
IDENTIFIERS	Delaware; New Mexico; *School Lunch Program; *Summer Food Service Program; Texas; Washington

ABSTRACT

During the school year, the School Lunch Program provides one-third to one-half of the nutrients low-income children consume every day. However, the rate of participation by eligible children in the Summer Food Service Program is only 15.5 percent of the target population. Created by Congress in 1968, the Summer Food Service Program is designed to provide funds for eligible sponsoring organizations to serve nutritious meals to children from needy areas when school is closed. The Community Childhood Hunger Identification Project found that about five million children under 12 years of age are hungry at some point each month. Children need sound nutrition not only for their physical development, but for their mental development as well. And children's need for nutritious meals does not end when summer vacation begins. This report contains tables on the summer food program with school-lunch attendance, growth in summer food program attendance, and growth in summer food sites for all states and the District of Columbia from July 1991 to July 1992. Also included are selected state profiles of Delaware, New Mexico, Washington, and Texas. Summer food service program reimbursement rates for 1993 and eligibility guidelines are also included. (JPT)

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~~MISSED~~ New OPPORTUNITIES

A STATUS REPORT
ON THE

SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN

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January 27, 1993

SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN: NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Welcome to the Summer Food Service Program status report. Produced by the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC), and modeled after FRAC's School Breakfast Program scorecard, this booklet contains data on participation in the Summer Food Program during the summers of 1991 and 1992.

The booklet provides a status report on the effort of each state and the District of Columbia to provide nutritious meals to children of families with low incomes, during periods when school is closed for vacation. Those children are unable to participate in the School Lunch and Breakfast programs because school is not in session. During the school year, the School Lunch Program provides one-third to one-half of the nutrients low-income children consume every day. Without summer food, many children risk going without these nutritious meals.

The national record to date on providing meals to eligible children is dismal. In July 1992, the Average Daily Attendance in the Summer Food Program was 1,945,364 compared to the 12,583,910 children who received free or reduced-priced school lunches that academic year. These children live in families with incomes of less than 185 percent of poverty, and are the primary target population for summer food.

Only 15.5 percent of the target population for summer food is being reached. While there have been participation increases over the last few years (an increase of 8.9 percent from 1990 to 1991, and of 5.7 percent from 1991 to 1992), there is still much to be done.

The Summer Food Service Program was created by Congress in 1968. It is an entitlement program designed to provide funds for eligible sponsoring organizations to serve nutritious meals to children from needy areas when school is closed. No qualifying organization may be denied funding. Eligible sponsoring organizations include: (1) public or private nonprofit school food authorities, (2) units of local, municipal, county, tribal or state government, (3) residential camps or National Youth Sports Programs, and (4) private nonprofit organizations.

The Summer Food Program is administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), which provides money for state agencies to operate summer food at the state level and to reimburse eligible sponsors for meals served to children at feeding sites. Eligible feeding sites are either "open sites," those ***located*** in areas where 50 percent or more of the children live in families with incomes of less than 185 percent of poverty, or "enrolled sites," those in which 50 percent of the children ***attending*** live in families with incomes under 185 percent of poverty.

Based upon estimates from the Community Childhood Hunger Identification Project, the most rigorous study of hunger ever conducted in this country, about five million children under 12 years of age are hungry at some point each month. Just as school lunch and school breakfast are important tools for eliminating hunger during the school year, summer food is an important tool for eliminating hunger during vacation time.

The need for children to have nutritious meals is not only important for their physical development, but for their mental development as well. The link between adequate nutrition and the ability to learn has been clearly established. Studies have demonstrated the positive impact of school meals on test scores, tardiness and absenteeism among students. Children on vacation should still be learning -- education and growth do not stop during the summer months. Summer food provides nutritious meals children need, and when coupled with recreation and tutoring programs, it offers a developmental program as well.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, drastic budgetary and administrative changes (including the elimination of private nonprofit organizations as sponsors, and limitations on the kinds of communities that can participate) were made in the Summer Food Program, which led to a significant drop in participation. After 1982, participation began to increase slowly. Private nonprofit organizations were restored as potential sponsors in 1989. That restoration and renewed interest by advocacy organizations resulted in a 17.8 percent increase in participation from 1989 to 1992. During the last year, the renewed interest by advocates has been reflected in a new focus by state agencies and USDA on recruitment of sponsors.

Since 1991, FRAC has been coordinating the nationwide **Campaign to End Childhood Hunger**. The Campaign is designed to alert the public and policy-makers to the magnitude of the childhood hunger problem in this country and to work toward solutions. The Campaign includes anti-hunger advocates in every state and more than 100 national organizations. One of the Campaign's major goals is the expansion of summer food.

In 1994, the federal legislation that governs summer food expires and must be renewed by Congress. Anti-hunger advocates are hopeful that many of the current legislative and regulatory restrictions in summer food that hinder expanded participation can be removed, including unnecessary limitations on private nonprofit sponsors, and on the criteria for community eligibility.

In the meantime however, creative sponsors and state agency staff have shown that access to summer food can be significantly expanded, even now. That creativity, coupled with a renewed focus on summer food expansion by advocates and government summer food staff, and the establishment of new leadership in USDA, makes this a particularly good time to launch a nationwide campaign to gain new sponsors.

Millions of kids are hungry in America and summer food can make a difference. We ask you to join the nationwide effort to: find more sponsors for summer food; increase the number of feeding sites; and increase the number of children who are given the opportunity to feed their bodies and develop their minds through participation in summer food.

Food Research and Action Center
February 1993

EXPLANATION OF THE NUMBERS USED IN THE STATUS REPORT

There are three sets of state-by-state data included in this Summer Food Service Program status report: (1) the Average Daily Attendance (ADA) in July 1992 for summer food compared to School Lunch Program participation in 1992; (2) the growth in Average Daily Attendance from July 1991 to July 1992; and (3) the growth in summer food sites from July 1991 to July 1992.

I. *Summer Food Attendance Compared to School Lunch Attendance*

Children receiving free or reduced-priced meals at school are the primary target population for the Summer Food Service Program. These children live in families with incomes below 185 percent of the federal poverty line. Therefore, comparing summer food participation to participation in school lunch provides a good measure for how successful summer food is in achieving its goal.

II. *Growth in Attendance*

The participation rate in summer food reached its high point in 1976 and declined through the late 1970s and the 1980s due to a general decline in government interest in summer food, the removal of private nonprofit organizations as sponsors and the placing of other restrictions on the program. With some renewed interest in the program and the return of private nonprofits in 1989, program participation has increased.

III. *Growth in Summer Food Sites*

Efforts to increase participation in summer food should be focused on two significant areas: outreach to the parents of low-income children regarding the availability of meals and the location of feeding sites; and recruitment of sponsors to operate sites or to expand the number of sites they currently operate.

Comparison of Participation in Summer Food and School Lunch, 1992

State	School Lunch (reduced price)	Summer Food	SF % of SL Participation
Alabama	306045	45560	14.9%
Alaska	22135	52	0.2%
Arizona	216811	21789	10.0%
Arkansas	164065	14138	8.6%
California	1596718	122300	7.7%
Colorado	128832	16185	12.6%
Connecticut	92978	22092	23.8%
Delaware	23221	16459	70.9%
D.C.	38554	6011	15.6%
Florida	699616	189485	27.1%
Georgia	436217	67879	15.6%
Hawaii	43097	3800	8.8%
Idaho	57213	2746	4.8%
Illinois	543038	65113	12.0%
Indiana	198815	15497	7.8%
Iowa	113061	7377	6.5%
Kansas	114421	7500	6.6%
Kentucky	257150	23188	9.0%
Louisiana	424225	54119	12.8%
Maine	48880	2791	5.7%
Maryland	161859	28886	17.8%
Massachusetts	176487	20020	11.3%
Michigan	343515	48029	14.0%
Minnesota	160593	13667	8.5%
Mississippi	297850	42936	14.4%
Missouri	229675	22287	9.7%
Montana	37669	3301	8.8%
Nebraska	68601	5880	8.6%
Nevada	35537	3352	9.4%
New Hampshire	25591	1995	7.8%
New Jersey	253802	61782	24.3%
New Mexico	128339	68818	53.6%
New York	925196	358857	38.8%
North Carolina	364193	47538	13.1%
North Dakota	29424	2706	9.2%
Ohio	415247	35999	8.7%
Oklahoma	195000	11464	5.9%
Oregon	111227	10510	9.4%
Pennsylvania	400210	100936	25.2%
Rhode Island	35362	9284	26.3%
South Carolina	249481	69292	27.8%
South Dakota	44282	5059	11.4%
Tennessee	268822	30688	11.4%
Texas	1283719	111682	8.7%
Utah	87270	11055	12.7%
Vermont	18414	820	4.5%
Virginia	232599	30601	13.2%
Washington	185513	16644	9.0%
West Virginia	100220	9794	9.8%
Wisconsin	172386	16648	9.7%
Wyoming	20735	1047	5.0%
National	**12583910**	**1945364**	**15.5%**

Note: Approximately 810,000 of the 12.5 million children who receive free and reduced-price school meals continue to receive meals during summer school programs and cannot participate in the summer food program. The national figure includes U.S. territories and does not equal the total of the state figures listed here.

Growth in Summer Food Attendance, 1991-1992

State	1991 ADA	1992 ADA	Growth
Alabama	46745	45560	-2.5%
Alaska	44	52	18.2%
Arizona	18617	21789	17.0%
Arkansas	10301	14138	37.2%
California	148709	122300	-17.8%
Colorado	11360	16185	42.5%
Connecticut	19235	22092	14.9%
Delaware	14477	16459	13.7%
D.C.	6318	6011	-4.9%
Florida	187666	189485	1.0%
Georgia	66514	67879	2.1%
Hawaii	2993	3800	27.0%
Idaho	1842	2746	49.1%
Illinois	77984	65113	-16.5%
Indiana	14728	15497	5.2%
Iowa	6953	7377	6.1%
Kansas	5250	7500	42.9%
Kentucky	26757	23188	-13.3%
Louisiana	53939	54119	0.3%
Maine	2268	2791	23.1%
Maryland	28463	28886	1.5%
Massachusetts	19489	20020	2.7%
Michigan	49766	48029	-3.5%
Minnesota	13827	13667	-1.2%
Mississippi	45649	42936	-5.9%
Missouri	18859	22287	18.2%
Montana	3013	3301	9.6%
Nebraska	5057	5880	16.3%
Nevada	1280	3352	161.9%
New Hampshire	1236	1995	61.4%
New Jersey	66960	61782	-7.7%
New Mexico	51181	68818	34.5%
New York	335679	358857	6.9%
North Carolina	42667	47538	11.4%
North Dakota	1885	2706	43.6%
Ohio	34663	35999	3.9%
Oklahoma	7532	11464	52.2%
Oregon	9874	10510	6.4%
Pennsylvania	86070	100936	17.3%
Rhode Island	8512	9284	9.1%
South Carolina	67246	69292	3.0%
South Dakota	5359	5059	-5.6%
Tennessee	25211	30688	21.7%
Texas	78368	111682	42.5%
Utah	9621	11055	14.9%
Vermont	454	820	80.6%
Virginia	27495	30601	11.3%
Washington	13676	16644	21.7%
West Virginia	7600	9794	28.9%
Wisconsin	14628	16648	13.8%
Wyoming	1898	1047	-44.8%
National	**1839674**	**1945364**	**5.7%**

Note: Participation figures are collected by USDA and are based on Average Daily Attendance (ADA) in July (in August for Alaska). All numbers are preliminary and minor changes may be expected in final tabulations.

Growth in Summer Food Sites, 1991-1992

State	91 Sites	92 Sites	Growth
Alabama	581	614	5.7%
Alaska	1	3	200.0%
Arizona	234	256	9.4%
Arkansas	113	134	18.6%
California	1230	1297	5.4%
Colorado	104	151	45.2%
Connecticut	229	237	3.5%
Delaware	332	326	-1.8%
D.C.	45	46	2.2%
Florida	1416	1516	7.1%
Georgia	1033	1017	-1.5%
Hawaii	27	32	18.5%
Idaho	22	38	72.7%
Illinois	1073	1144	6.6%
Indiana	197	222	12.7%
Iowa	108	100	-7.4%
Kansas	63	74	17.5%
Kentucky	337	371	10.1%
Louisiana	341	436	27.9%
Maine	32	45	40.6%
Maryland	508	545	7.3%
Massachusetts	303	305	0.7%
Michigan	913	927	1.5%
Minnesota	237	282	19.0%
Mississippi	293	279	-4.8%
Missouri	285	376	31.9%
Montana	34	37	8.8%
Nebraska	57	76	33.3%
Nevada	23	54	134.8%
New Hampshire	27	43	59.3%
New Jersey	849	934	10.0%
New Mexico	542	598	10.3%
New York	2017	2166	7.4%
North Carolina	547	524	-4.2%
North Dakota	12	17	41.7%
Ohio	513	569	10.9%
Oklahoma	133	156	17.3%
Oregon	140	139	-0.7%
Pennsylvania	1419	1828	28.8%
Rhode Island	164	161	-1.8%
South Carolina	1116	1144	2.5%
South Dakota	87	88	1.1%
Tennessee	412	497	20.6%
Texas	818	1026	25.4%
Utah	82	77	-6.1%
Vermont	14	28	100.0%
Virginia	415	495	19.3%
Washington	296	321	8.4%
West Virginia	255	301	18.0%
Wisconsin	177	218	23.2%
Wyoming	19	16	-15.8%
National	**20682**	**22859**	**10.5%**

SELECTED STATE PROFILES

There are two major objectives that must be achieved before participation levels in the Summer Food Service Program for Children can rise to acceptable levels. We must: recruit more sponsoring organizations to operate feeding sites; and inform eligible families of the availability of free nutritious meals at sites that currently exist, and make those sites more attractive to children.

In some states, the effort to recruit sponsors has been more successful than in others. Virtually every state puts advertisements in local newspapers promoting summer food and soliciting applications to sponsor feeding sites. Most states also mail information to potential sponsors, such as schools, local governments, camps and other eligible private nonprofit organizations. While important, these efforts have met with only limited success.

Many state agencies have achieved more substantial success by going beyond this minimal effort by:

- developing a detailed workplan making recruitment of sponsors the highest summer food priority;
- targeting mailings to the most likely sponsors in areas of high need;
- following the targeted mailings with phone calls and training sessions;
- soliciting the help of existing sponsors to recruit new sponsors and to expand the number of feeding sites they previously operated; and
- meeting personally with potential sponsors in one-to-one meetings or in small group sessions.

The most successful recruitment efforts for new sponsors occur when state agencies find a source of money to devote to recruitment of new sponsors and work in a coordinated program with a state or local advocacy organization.

In some instances, state agencies find the extra money for these projects in their own budgets. In other cases, the advocacy group finds the necessary funds to cover the outreach campaign costs. In any case, it is the wise state agency and advocacy group that takes advantage of combined resources by working together.

On the following pages are profiles which illustrate the more successful sponsor recruitment techniques used by state agencies and advocacy groups.

Delaware Leads the Nation in Summer Food Participation

Delaware illustrates the impact a highly dedicated staff can make when recruitment of sponsors becomes a priority. Delaware has a summer food participation rate of 71 percent, by far the highest in the nation.

While Delaware is a small state, which allows for a more concentrated effort geographically, other small states do not have participation rates close to that of Delaware. Delaware's success clearly shows that it is possible to expand summer food participation beyond the national average of 15.5 percent.

Delaware's success can be attributed to the "can do" attitude of the state's Child Nutrition Services staff working on summer food. They have promoted an approach that stresses "Creating Partners" to develop sites to feed children.

The Delaware staff took to heart the summer food regulation calling upon the state to identify areas that are not served or are underserved and to recruit sponsors for those areas. For example:

- When rural areas had no facility to serve as a site, the staff philosophy was "if we can't bring children to a feeding site, we will bring the feeding site to the children." A mobile van was acquired and sent to sites advertised to the children. Children were brought on board, served a meal and given a lesson on nutrition.

- When a sponsor had to drop sites feeding hundreds of children in the central part of the state, the staff convinced the director of a nearby sponsoring organization to operate the dropped sites.

- When low participation rates at some sites became apparent, particularly among teenagers, arrangements were made with the Junior Training Partnership Program to pay teenagers to go door-to-door recruiting children to attend the feeding site. Those teenagers also became staff for the feeding sites, drawing a salary and helping the sponsors stretch their budget. And, as an added bonus, other teenagers began showing up at the sites to be with their friends who were now site staff.

New Mexico Makes Statewide Commitment to Increase Participation

In the winter of 1987, the New Mexico Health and Environment Department initiated a three year outreach program to double the participation of children in summer food, from 12,342 the previous summer. By 1989, the Department had far exceeded its goal; 32,671 children participated, a 165 percent increase. Participation is now dramatically higher -- 68,818 in 1992. To achieve this great success, the Department developed a clear and detailed program to expand participation, a program that can be a model for other states to emulate:

- New Mexico allocated special state money and raised additional outside money to hire a Program Manager to devote full time to summer food expansion;

- Recognizing that no national body such as USDA had developed outreach materials, the state developed an outreach brochure, a return postcard for potential sponsoring organizations to indicate interest, written program models with budgets, menus, posters, flyers, and public service announcements;

- The state targeted certain communities for more extensive work based upon need as determined by census and school data and based upon the existence of possible sponsors;

- The state made contact with potential sponsoring organizations indirectly through mailings and by contacting state associations of possible sponsoring organizations, such as the Association of Counties and the School Food Service Association, who in turn contacted local members. The state made direct contact through meetings with parks and recreation directors and school superintendents in targeted communities;

- The state made follow-up visits with potential sponsors, providing program information through slide shows, talks, and written materials, as well as providing technical assistance on setting up the program and solving common problems;

- The state helped sponsors develop techniques to recruit children to the program through use of the media, neighborhood word-of-mouth, flyers and other advertising techniques; and finally

- The state followed through. After the program started, they continued to assist sponsors in dealing with problems they encountered.

A Successful Outreach Effort Comes Together in Washington State

In Washington state, all the elements of a successful program to expand participation in summer food have come together to serve as a model for other states.

As a result of the passage of legislation sponsored by the Washington State Dietetic Association, the state decided in 1988 to assume responsibility for operation of summer food from the USDA. (States may cede administration of summer food to the regional offices of USDA. Regional USDA offices now administer programs in Missouri, New York, Michigan, Georgia, Virginia, and California.)

The state agency's summer food staff, in cooperation with advocates, began to develop recruitment materials; target outreach to needy areas; and employ a specialist to recruit school districts into the summer food program. Since then, participation has more than doubled, from an average daily attendance of 8,198 in 1989 to 16,644 in 1992.

The Washington Food Policy Action Center, a statewide advocacy organization, has worked closely with the state to increase summer food recruitment efforts. They have developed a joint strategy with a specific schedule of activities designed to expand summer food participation. In addition to the normal administrative tasks performed by the state, the strategy calls for:

- a state "800" number to handle telephone inquiries about summer food;
- development of other statewide organizational allies to broaden visibility of summer food and identify potential local sponsors;
- paying a consultant with state funds to create census-based maps of local communities in order to develop site eligibility information and help target low-income neighborhoods for recruitment;
- sending letters from the state agency to potential new sponsors with follow-up by the advocacy group, especially in targeted areas, including phone calls and slide show presentations;
- development of more child recruitment brochures and flyers by the state;
- participation by the advocacy group in national advocacy efforts to develop a higher public profile for summer food;
- three training sessions to be held by the state in the spring of 1993: sponsor training; "train the trainer" training; and food preparation training; and
- the state and the advocacy group to jointly hold a conference in the fall of 1993 to evaluate the previous summer's program, develop new sponsor recruitment efforts, share experiences between new and old sponsors, offer specific skill development training, and plan next year's activities.

Texas Summer Food Outreach Effort Emphasizes Community Service

In 1988, the Texas summer food program provided meals to less than five percent of the children getting free and reduced-price meals during the school year. The Texas Association of Community Action Agencies (TACAA), a leader in statewide anti-hunger advocacy, set out to improve the participation rate.

TACAA obtained funding from the Texas Department of Community Affairs under the Community Food and Nutrition Program in 1988 to start a statewide summer food outreach project. TACAA hired a full-time staff person to conduct the outreach project. He was trained on summer food policy and procedures by the Texas Department of Human Services (TDHS), the agency responsible for statewide administration of summer food.

Recruitment of new sponsors was established as the top priority of the outreach project. TACAA makes contact with potential sponsor groups, including: schools, local governments, residential camps, private non-profit agencies, and operators of the National Youth Sports Program.

Intrastate coordination is a key component of the TACAA outreach project. Besides the training provided by TDHS, the state agency also helps TACAA obtain statistics identifying schools with the highest percentages of needy children. TACAA also works with TDHS to evaluate the summer food effort and to strategize on each year's program.

The summer food outreach project has developed an effective public-private partnership with the Associated Milk Producers Institute. The six-state dairy cooperative has paid marketing experts to develop and provide summer food publicity materials to recruit children to the feeding sites at no cost to the sponsors.

The result of the summer food effort is a 135 percent increase in participation over the last four years, with a larger increase each year. The TACAA project has been a cost-effective way to increase the availability of summer food to Texas children, bringing additional federal dollars to the state.

The key to the increase has been the creative, active recruitment effort by TACAA. TACAA works in cities and isolated rural areas throughout Texas. In Austin, TACAA has helped join a successful city-operated Parks and Recreation Program and a successful feeding program operated by the Austin Independent School District.

In rural Jasper County, in East Texas, TACAA has worked with the Mt. Olive Baptist Church to put together a program heavily dependent upon volunteer church labor to provide over 700 lunches per day.

In both urban and rural areas, the programs in Texas have been based upon the need to provide both year-round nutrition and year-round learning opportunities for participating children.

SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM REIMBURSEMENT RATES, 1993

State agencies receive funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture with which they reimburse sponsors for eligible Summer Food Service Program meals served. Meals are reimbursed on either a per-meal basis or for the actual cost of running the program, whichever is less.

Sponsors may be reimbursed for lunch and either breakfast or a snack each day. Camps may be reimbursed for up to four meals per day.

The per meal reimbursement rate is broken down into administrative and operating costs. Administrative costs are those incurred in the management of summer food such as office expenses, administrative salaries, insurance, and some financial management costs.

Operating costs are those incurred in the preparation and distribution of the food, provision of transportation in rural areas, and program activities and salary for staff supervising the children.

The state can deny reimbursement for any number of meals served if there are program violations.

RATES FOR 1993 (Per Meal)

	Operating Costs		Administrative Costs		
			Urban or Vended*		Rural or Self-Prep*
Breakfast	$1.1375	+	$0.0825	or	$0.1050
Lunch	2.0425	+	0.1600	or	0.1950
Supper	2.0425	+	0.1600	or	0.1950
Snack	0.5350	+	0.0425	or	0.0525

* A vended program is one in which a sponsor contracts with another entity to prepare meals. A self-prep site is one in which the sponsor prepares its own meals.

ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

Children receiving free or reduced-priced meals at school are the primary target population for the Summer Food Service Program. If over 50 percent of the children in the geographic area in which the feeding site is located live in families with incomes below 185 percent of the federal poverty line (the eligibility criteria for reduced price school meals), a sponsor may operate an "open site" summer food program. The sponsor of an "open site" program may be reimbursed for all eligible meals served regardless of the income of the individual child.

A sponsor may also operate an "enrolled site" summer food program. In an enrolled site, the sponsor must document that 50 percent of the children enrolled and attending the feeding site live in families with incomes under 185 percent of poverty. The sponsor may be reimbursed for all eligible meals served to children in an enrolled site.

INCOME GUIDELINES FOR SUMMER FOOD FOR 1993

Size of Household	Federal Poverty Level			185% of Poverty		
	Year	Month	Week	Year	Month	Week
1	$ 6,810	568	131	12,599	1,050	234
2	9,190	766	177	17,002	1,417	327
3	11,570	965	223	21,405	1,784	412
4	13,950	1,163	269	25,808	2,151	497
5	16,330	1,361	315	30,211	2,518	581
6	18,710	1,560	360	34,614	2,885	666
7	21,090	1,758	406	39,017	3,252	751
8	23,470	1,956	452	43,420	3,619	835
each additional	+2,380	199	46	4,403	367	60

ABOUT FRAC

The Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) is a national group working for more effective public policies to eradicate domestic hunger and undernutrition. FRAC, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, was established in 1970.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This status report was written and prepared by Mike Haga and Ann K. Kittlaus. Assistance and review were provided by Robert J. Fersh, Barry Barth, Ed Cooney, Michele Tingling-Clemmons, Jud Dolphin, Christin Driscoll, Geraldine Henchy, Lynn Parker, and Alan Sharpe.

FRAC gratefully acknowledges funding from The Prudential Foundation, The Nathan Cummings Foundation and Share Our Strength, which helped make possible the publication of this status report, as well as FRAC's work to expand participation in the Summer Food Service Program. FRAC is also grateful to the many supporters of the Campaign to End Childhood Hunger, including the Kraft General Foods Foundation, Public Welfare Foundation, The Gerber Companies Foundation, Sequoia Foundation, MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger, Ruth Mott Fund, James C. Penney Foundation and the Sara Lee Foundation.

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